

5 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Basic and Geographic  
Intelligence

SUBJECT : NIS

Your Revised NIS Coverage

1. I agree with your selection of Group 1 (high priority countries) with the following exceptions. No NIS has been written on [redacted] we should not begin now. I do not think [redacted] North Korea, and South Korea deserve the priority you give them. I suggest they be added to Group 2.

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My Own Views on Revision of NIS

2. The NIS is a long-time friend of OER's and I believe the General Survey is now a very good publication. The problem is that with the building of pressure for policy support we simply cannot afford to give the NIS in its present form the attention it deserves. As you have indicated, the quality of our contributions has declined somewhat. I am concerned that the decline will accelerate as our ability to live off past research diminishes. The need for change is, therefore, apparent. I have arrived at the following very tentative conclusions.

(1) There is sufficient need for basic research on foreign economies to warrant continuation of at least part of the NIS program, but its shape should be considerably changed.

(2) The NIS, as a coordinated USIB product, should be dropped. Interagency coordination achieves little, and wastes time. CIA should continue to produce basic intelligence in its areas of competence as a service of common concern.

(3) Detailed military or military-related basic intelligence should, if necessary, be produced by the DoD for its own customers.

(4) CIA should produce Annual Surveys of major developments in all important countries -- perhaps some 30-40 in all. These Annual Surveys should:

- Cover primarily political and economic subjects, but include some information on military developments and on intelligence and security.

- Discuss recent trends and relate these to U.S. national interests.

- Include a large amount of statistical information.

- OCI and OER would produce the Surveys. OBGi could be responsible for publication and dissemination, but would have to allow flexibility in scheduling in response to changing needs.

(5) Because the Annual Surveys would be focused on recent change, there would still be a need for more basic studies, similar to the present General Surveys. These Basic Surveys, however, would be prepared on a much lengthened cycle, perhaps averaging 5 years. This would mean about 16 Basic Surveys per year. CIA would continue to prepare those on the Communist countries because of the lack of expertise outside. All other Basic Surveys would be contracted out by OBGi -- to Commerce for the economic sections -- but reviewed in OER and OCI.

(6) The "NIS Factbook" would be continued.

(7) The IC Staff should be kept out of this, except perhaps to aid in ascertaining user reaction. The EIC could help in evaluating the usefulness of the economic sections of the NIS.

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